THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The channel is already quite popular among Malayalee population in the Gulf countries.

(b) to (d). DD-4 is telecasting 14 hours of programmes per day at present. However, due to constraints of resources, manpower and other infrastructural facilities, it is not possible to increase its telecasting time for the present.

[Translation]

Telephone network in rural areas with foreign capital

3348. SHRI NITISH KUMAR :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to use foreign capital resources for telephone network in rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken any steps for the foreign capital investment so far in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of the foreign capital investment made till July, 1996; and

(e) the target fixed for total foreign capital investment in rural areas during 1996-97?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (e). Seven Indian registered companies having foreign equity (as detailed in attached statement) have been given LOIs (Letters of Intent) for providing Basic Telephone Service including Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in ten Telecom Circles. As per their roll out plan submitted alongwith the bids they propose to provide 1,55,590 Village Public Telephones in first three years. No licence has been issued till date to any of the LOI holders, and hence the question of foreign capital investment and its target does not arise.

STATEMENT

Name of the Bidder	Name of the Circles for which LOI issue	Foreign Equity percentage	Village Public Telephone to be provided by private operator in first 3 years
M/s. Basic Tele-services Ltd.	Tamil Nadu	25% to 49%	3904
M/s. HFCL BEZEO Telecom Ltd.	Delhi	41%	NIL
	U.P. (West)		38783
	Haryana		1931
	Orissa		39500
M/s. Tata Tele-services Ltd.	Andhra Pradesh	10%	9635
M/s. Techno Tele-com Ltd.	Bihar	15%	22000
M/s. Essar Comm-vision	Punjab	10%	5442
M/s. Reliance Telecom.	Gujarat	10%	8635
M/s. Hughes Ispat Ltd.	Maharashtra	40%	25760

Lack of Telephone facilities in Madhya Pradesh

3349. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Telephone facilities are lacking in the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh, particularly in Mandla and Bilaspur districts;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken for its improvement;

(c) whether the Government propose to connect all tehsil Headquarters with Mandla District Headquarters by Telephone; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?